

# The Ever-Turning Wheel: Wrestling with the Costs of Compassion

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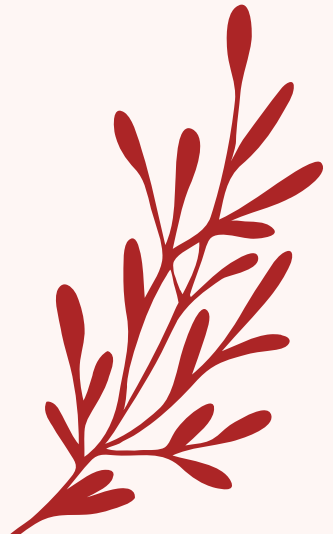
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FREEING AGUNOT. PREVENTING ABUSE.



# Albert Einstein

“A human being is part of the whole, called by us “Universe,” a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest—a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. **Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.** Nobody is able to achieve this completely, but the striving for such an achievement is in itself a part of the liberation and a foundation for inner security.

—Albert Einstein, as quoted in the New York Times, March 29, 1972”



# Talmud Shabbat 15b

שבת קנ"א ב"ד

אמר לה

ר

ל ברבי אומר: "ונתן לה רחמים ורחמך והרבך", כל המרחם על הבריות — מרחמין עליו מן השמים, וכל שאינו מרחם על הבריות — אין מרחמין עליו מן השמים

Shabbat 151b:14

In a similar vein, the Gemara relates that **Rabbi Ḥiyya said to his wife: When a poor person comes to the house, be quick to give him bread so that they will be quick to give bread to your children. She said to him: Are you cursing them, your children? He said to her: It is a verse that is written, as it says: "Due to this thing," and the school of Rabbi Yishmael taught that it is a wheel that continuously turns in the world. Similarly, it was taught in a *baraita* that Rabbi Gamliel, son of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, says: The verse that states: "And He will show you mercy and have compassion on you and multiply you" (Deuteronomy 13:18) teaches us that anyone who has compassion for God's creatures will receive compassion from Heaven, and anyone who does not have compassion for God's creatures will not receive compassion from Heaven.**

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# Compassion Fatigue

Compassion fatigue is a term that describes the **physical, emotional, and psychological impact of helping others** — often through experiences of stress or trauma. Compassion fatigue is often mistaken for burnout, which is a cumulative sense of fatigue or dissatisfaction.

—<https://www.webmd.com/mental-health/signs-compassion-fatigue>

# What Causes Compassion Fatigue?

01

Desensitization

02

Secondary  
Trauma

03

Lack of Self Care/  
Time to Process

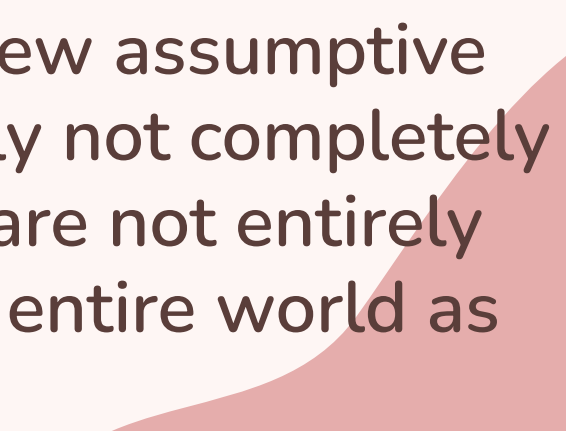



# What is Secondary trauma?

Supporting people through their traumatic situations can be a trauma of its own, called **secondary trauma**. It's especially common among helping professionals.

The chronic stress of taking in others' trauma can lead to symptoms similar to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) such as emotional exhaustion or hypervigilance.

<https://psychcentral.com/health/secondary-trauma>





“The inner worlds of victims who have ‘recovered’ now reflect an acknowledgement of misfortune, an awareness of vulnerability. These survivors know their prior assumptions were naive, that tragedy can strike and no one is invulnerable. Their new assumptive worlds, however, are typically not completely negative...They know they are not entirely safe...yet they don’t see the entire world as dangerous.

–Ronnie Janoff-Bulman

A close-up photograph of several hands of different skin tones and ages stacked together in a gesture of support and gratitude. The hands are arranged in a circular pattern, with fingers overlapping. One hand has a tattoo on the back, and another has a ring. The background is a blurred wooden surface. The image is decorated with stylized leaf graphics in the corners and a large pink circular overlay on the left side containing the text.

Thank you!!